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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/46/327 and Corr.1 and Add.1; A/C.5/46/CRP.1; A/C.5/47/16)

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/45/797; A/C.5/47/2 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/47/7 and Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/47/6, A/47/16 (Parts I and II and Part II/Add.1), A/47/32, A/47/116, A/47/159 and Add.1, A/47/407 and A/47/408)

1. Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, referred to the revised estimates (A/C.5/47/2), which reflected the financial impact of the restructuring of the Secretariat. The European Community fully supported that restructuring, which had been endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 46/232; the first phase, which related to the Secretariat at Headquarters, had consisted of allocating activities in a rational manner among a few major departments. The reduction in the number of high-level posts, which had been proposed by the Secretary-General and recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) for approval by the Assembly, was the logical consequence of the reorganization.

2. Concerns had been expressed with regard to the implications of restructuring for programme delivery, and both CPC and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had requested further information on the subject. The primary objective was not to achieve budgetary reductions, but rather to ensure that the Organization functioned as effectively as possible through a productive use of available resources. The European Community attached great importance to reporting on the various qualitative aspects of the restructuring process and, accordingly, looked forward to the report which the Secretary-General intended to submit at the forty-eighth session.

3. The restructuring had not been completed and must also involve departments away from Headquarters. The European Community noted that the Secretary-General had emphasized the integrated treatment of all development issues and had acknowledged that the relationship between social, humanitarian and human rights issues still needed to be addressed; the Community welcomed the measures taken to rationalize staffing in the area of social development and to strengthen the resources devoted to human rights. The Secretary-General was well aware that if those changes were to be implemented successfully within a limited timeframe, high levels of human resource management skills and the active support of staff would be required.

(Mr. Richardson, United Kingdom)

4. The European Community welcomed the fact that 74 vacant posts had been identified for redeployment. The Community believed that vacant posts should be reviewed regularly with a view to their redeployment and would be prepared to consider proposals for the development of an appropriate mechanism to that end. The provisions of the Financial Regulations relating to the transfer of resources between budget sections, which had not been amended since 1970, were not being applied, and were no longer relevant to the current structure of the programme budget. Mr. Thornburgh had stated that the Secretariat did not intend to propose amendments to those provisions. In those circumstances, the Community wondered how greater flexibility in the use of staff resources would be achieved.

5. The European Community noted with satisfaction the recognition that appropriate workload analysis techniques were necessary. The Community had taken note of the recommendations contained in document A/C.5/46/CRP.1 and agreed that pilot studies could be carried out. Workload standards should be applied not only to Professional staff but also to the General Service category, where the productivity gains resulting from technological innovations would probably be the greatest. Programme managers should display greater initiative in improving the performance of the departments for which they were responsible. In that connection, the European Community noted that the Secretariat had apparently not yet implemented the CPC recommendation, approved by the General Assembly in resolutions 46/185 and 46/189 concerning the establishment of a system of responsibility and accountability for programme managers; the Community would appreciate clarifications in that regard.

6. The European Community emphasized the significance of the reform undertaken pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/213, which had initiated a decision-making process based on the widest possible consensus among Member States; the Community remained committed to cooperating in the strengthening of the working methods of the Fifth Committee.

7. The European Community looked forward to examining, in the context of the first budget performance report, the implications of the current vacancy rates. It also hoped that the report would reflect the necessary adjustment in the appropriations for General Service staff in New York, as requested in General Assembly resolutions 46/186 and 45/241. The Community could accept the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the 13 posts in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which no longer had any programmatic justification, provided that the arrangement was strictly temporary and did not involve any increase in the appropriations under either section 15 or any other section. Moreover, the Community noted that, as indicated by CPC, the document on procedures and norms for the creation, suppression or redeployment of posts was disappointing.

8. Lastly, the decisions to be taken on the revised estimates were of considerable practical significance since, as noted by ACABQ, difficulties

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would result if the structure of the budget failed to correspond to the new organizational structure of the Secretariat. It was incumbent upon the Fifth Committee to ensure that the Organization had the requisite level of resources available to carry out the substantial responsibilities now entrusted to it and to ensure that such resources, which were, of necessity, limited, were used to good effect.

9. Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries and referring to agenda item 103, said that the administrative restructuring should be viewed in the light of not only General Assembly resolutions 46/185 and 46/232, but also the larger reforms undertaken to strengthen the Organization's role in peacemaking and peace-keeping, the economic and social fields and development assistance. The restructuring of the Secretariat was central to all those reforms.

10. The Nordic countries supported the Secretary-General's efforts to restructure and streamline the Secretariat. They welcomed the savings which had resulted from the first stage of the restructuring process, while emphasizing that such savings were not an end in themselves.

11. Against the background of the wider reform process, greater attention should be paid to three areas which fell within the Fifth Committee's mandate: the budget and budget procedures; the structure and administration of the Secretariat; and monitoring, evaluation and inspection mechanisms. The budget process, which had undergone significant changes as a consequence of General Assembly resolution 41/213, had been thoroughly reformed. There might now be a need to re-examine the internal structure of the programme budget, as suggested by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General had emphasized the need for greater flexibility in the transfer of resources between budget sections and greater mobility of posts and personnel. The Nordic countries preferred to wait for the Secretary-General's next report and the supplementary information requested by ACABQ before taking a position on that issue.

12. The reforms under discussion under agenda item 103 concerned only the regular budget of the United Nations, whereas voluntarily financed programmes and funds covered a major part of the Organization's activities. The Nordic countries believed that the availability of voluntary resources for activities that properly belonged in the regular budget should not automatically be a reason for reducing the volume of the regular budget financing of those activities. They believed that the prototype of a new budget format (A/C.5/47/3) submitted by the Secretary-General would bring transparency to extrabudgetary resources and thereby enable Member States to discuss the question of how activities should be funded.

13. The delegations of the Nordic countries had time and time again stressed the need to respect the role and authority of the Secretary-General as the

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chief administrative officer of the Organization. Member States should refrain from intervening in administrative and personnel issues which were the Secretary-General's prerogative. However, they should receive enough information to enable them to analyse the programmatic impact of reforms, as well as information on the functioning of the departments and offices. The Nordic delegations looked forward to having such information in the Secretary-General's next report on restructuring.

14. Lastly, it was important to review the monitoring, evaluation and inspection functions if the United Nations was to be capable of implementing not only its traditional activities, but also the new responsibilities entrusted to it. In that connection, the delegations of the Nordic countries were concerned that the field administration and field activities of programmes such as UNDP and UNICEF were not scrutinized and examined in the same manner as the Headquarters arrangements. They believed that the Fifth Committee should look into the work and the terms of reference of the various intergovernmental and expert bodies which were in charge of planning, monitoring, evaluation and inspection. Those support functions should be reformed and strengthened to ensure the most effective and efficient administration of the organizations, programmes and funds.

15. Mrs. AGGREY-ORLEANS (Ghana) said she wished to focus on a few issues of profound concern to her delegation. The first was the question of priorities, which had been addressed, in particular by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management. As the General Assembly had reaffirmed in resolution 45/253, the medium-term plan was the principle policy directive of the United Nations and should serve as a framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budgets. However, the plan clearly defined five priorities, which reflected a delicate balance of the interests of Member States. In the delegation's view, there should be no question of reopening the discussion of those priorities by seeking to redefine their very content and concept when the programme budget was considered. Ghana found totally unacceptable the notion of redeploying the Secretariat's resources to new and supposedly higher priority mandates.

16. The new dimensions of insecurity in the world should not be allowed to obscure the continuing and devastating economic problems which constituted both the sources and the consequences of conflicts. Her delegation reiterated its conviction that the end of the cold war had made it propitious to reorient the Organization towards the issues that were more likely to promote peace and the enhancement of the well-being of all peoples, by addressing the real causes of tension. One of the focuses of such action should be the achievement of sustained and sustainable development in the developing countries. That was an end which any restructuring should have in view.

17. Her delegation opposed the idea of excessive flexibility in the allocation of the resources - particularly the human resources - of the

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Organization, as it could have repercussions on the implementation of programmes - which ran the risk of being selective - and even on the priorities established by the General Assembly. The current rules governing the allocation and reallocation of resources were sufficiently flexible, and there was no need to modify them.

18. The third issue of concern to her delegation was the System-Wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, under which it was important to devise specific programmes, devote adequate resources for their implementation, and indicate how each agency or organization intended to follow up the commitments made by the international community in adopting the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Contributions to the Plan of Action were extremely uneven from one agency or organization to another, and in its current form, the Plan of Action was more akin to a compilation of activities, some new and others not, than a set of truly integrated elements. The most disturbing feature was the incorporation of programmes that were themselves under review at the intergovernmental level, such as the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, the revised version of which might not contribute to the overall objectives sought for Africa. Furthermore, her delegation firmly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) that the System-Wide Plan should devote due attention to the role of women in development, particularly with regard to the access of women to the decision-making level.

19. Lastly, her delegation was disturbed to note that one year after the adoption of the New Agenda, the implementation of which was to be considered by the General Assembly at its next session, the Plan of Action had not yet been launched. In spite of its shortcomings, the Plan was a useful framework for action by the United Nations system and a practical tool to permit the international community to give effective support to Africa's efforts. Accordingly, her delegation attached the utmost importance to the Secretary-General launching the Plan of Action at the earliest possible time.

20. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) paid tribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General to restructure, streamline and trim the Secretariat. He recalled that, at its thirty-first session, CPC had requested the Secretary-General to report to the Fifth Committee, on a continuing basis, on the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization. It was therefore regrettable that the Committee had before it only revised estimates rather than a comprehensive presentation of the overall process of reform. He very much hoped that the Secretariat would provide the Committee, during the current session, with an explanatory note on the review of the Organization's functioning, and looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on the programmatic aspects of the revised estimates.

21. With regard to the manner in which the reform of the Secretariat was being carried out, he noted that the current phase of restructuring and streamlining had been approved by the General Assembly in resolution 46/232,

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and that the measures adopted to date were generally in line with the recommendations of the Group of 18, particularly those concerning the reduction in the number of high-level posts and the reorganization of the economic and social sector. He also noted that the objectives of the restructuring were set forth in the aforementioned resolution.

22. His delegation would like to see the Secretary-General engage in a dialogue with Member States as he reorganized the Secretariat. He should not merely report on what had already been done: it was imperative that he submit his plan for reform to the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, such as CPC, before measures were adopted, particularly when it was a question of abolishing or redefining high-level posts which had been established by those organs or on their recommendation.

23. While it appreciated the reduction in the number of high-level posts, his delegation would like the Secretariat to issue and regularly update a comprehensive list of established and temporary high-level posts, their geographical distribution and the names of those occupying them. It also considered it important that information be provided on the future of posts affected by the freeze on recruitment. The savings accruing from the freeze might be used partly for effecting separation payments in accordance with the Staff Regulations.

24. His delegation supported the view of the Secretary-General concerning the need for a certain degree of flexibility in the management of staff resources. It noted the redeployment of 30 out of 65 vacant posts, 12 of which had been reassigned to the Centre for Human Rights. While Japan acknowledged the existence of priority needs in that sector, it found it surprising that for the preceding three years the Centre had enjoyed the highest growth rate of any Secretariat unit without presenting to the General Assembly a complete list of its staff requirements. As the Advisory Committee had emphasized, it was essential that the Secretary-General should justify the use of staff resources on the basis of the long-term requirements of each programme or administrative unit rather than by presenting a series of ad hoc staff increases. A review of staff requirements should also be carried out, account being taken of the real workload of each unit.

25. Since the current phase of reform had been presented as merely the beginning of a more far-reaching process, it was to be hoped that the reform would extend to the Department of Economic and Social Development as well as the offices and departments located away from Headquarters and that it would result in improved system-wide coordination by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), priority being given, in that context, to follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

26. The reforms undertaken would benefit if Member States communicated their observations to the Secretary-General. His delegation felt that the proper

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administration of United Nations programmes and funds required periodic changes in the leadership of the various agencies. It thus welcomed the proposals regarding the limitation of terms for the heads of agencies and urged the Secretary-General to institute a system of rotation for staff members serving in administrative and budgetary posts.

27. With regard to the United States proposal concerning the deletion of the provision for staff assessments from the budget, which would make it possible to dispense with the complex administrative procedure for tax reimbursement and thus result in savings, it would be useful if the United States delegation would make it clear whether the United States legal requirements that had prompted the United Nations to adopt the staff assessment system had ceased to exist.

28. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States and referring to agenda item 105, pointed out that the current programme planning process and the regulations governing it were based on General Assembly resolution 37/234, adopted nearly a decade earlier. In that process, monitoring and evaluation were as important as the initial preparation of the plan and the programme aspects of the budget. The Committee for Programme and Coordination, at its thirty-second session, had considered the reports of the Secretary-General on programme performance (A/47/159 and Add.1) and on programme evaluation (A/47/116); the States members of the European Community could support the related recommendations formulated by CPC but wished to underline some points of wider relevance.

29. The picture of programme performance for the biennium 1990-1991 given in the report was meaningful only if the "outputs" were defined realistically. As the descriptions of the outputs were steadily being improved and refined, it was particularly difficult to make comparisons from one biennium to the next. As CPC had recommended on a number of occasions, the formulation of the Organization's objectives should be enhanced considerably and the relationship between those objectives and the related resources should be analysed thoroughly and presented coherently. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 46/185 and 46/189, had endorsed the recommendation of CPC regarding the establishment of a system of responsibility and accountability of programme managers. The States members of the European Community considered that the Organization in general, and programme execution in particular, stood to benefit from such a system and it would welcome specific information from the Secretariat on its implementation.

30. On the more general issue of evaluation, signs of improvement were equally wanting. Apart from the efforts made by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to judge to what extent outputs met the needs and expectations of end-users and the recognition by the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Trade Centre that self-evaluation also meant self-criticism, internal and external

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evaluation procedures were remarkably inadequate. The evaluation process had a cost and needed to be demonstrably cost-effective. That would not be the case so long as the medium-term plan and the objectives contained therein remained poorly drafted and difficult to apply. In that connection, the States members of the European Community wished to know what measures had been taken by the Secretariat during the past year to inform the special conferences convened under United Nations auspices of the programme budget implications of their draft resolutions, recommendations and decisions, as required by General Assembly resolution 46/189. In order for the regulations adopted in 1982 to be meaningful, not only must the plan and the programme budget be effective and user-friendly, but appropriate monitoring and evaluation phases must exist in the cycle. That was manifestly not the case.

31. In its current form, the report on programme performance was of marginal utility, its major failing being the lack of qualitative and analytical indicators capable of affording a real insight into the Secretariat's success in delivering programme outputs. In preparing the revised version of the report, which must take into account the improvements proposed pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/189, the Secretariat might consult delegations informally, to ensure that, in both content and form, the document did meet the requirements of its end-users. Further efforts were needed in the training of staff in evaluation techniques, and in the determination of overall resource requirements the two qualitative processes of monitoring and evaluation must be considered together.

32. The current format of the report did, however, offer one advantage in that it provided an interesting indication of the real priority given to "highest priority" outputs. It was a matter of concern that a lower proportion of "highest priority" outputs had been implemented in 1990-1991 than in 1988-1989. The Secretariat might also amplify the analysis in the table in paragraph 15 of document A/47/159 to show, for highest and lowest priority outputs, the extent to which their level of priority was reflected in their rate of implementation, termination or postponement. According to that table, the rate of implementation for highest priority outputs in 1990-1991 had been only 2.3 per cent higher than the rate for all outputs, while in the previous biennium the difference had been 9.3 per cent.

33. As for questions of coordination the European Community and its member States could also endorse the conclusions and recommendations of CPC regarding the review of the annual overview report of ACC and the report on the twenty-sixth series of Joint Meetings between CPC and ACC. They hoped that the current restructuring exercises would result in an improvement in both the relationship between ACC and CPC and in inter-agency coordination, including coordination in the field. The choice of UNCED follow-up as the topic for the next series of Joint Meetings was a positive element in that regard. It was regrettable, however, that the Economic and Social Council had not discussed the relationship between such coordination and the Council's new coordination segment.

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34. The Committee for Programme and Coordination had, however, devoted the major part of its session to the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The States members of the European Community were, in general, content with the consensus represented by the modifications recommended by CPC and those proposed by the Committee on Conferences concerning conference services. They wished to point out, however, that CPC had considered the revisions in almost intolerable circumstances. There was no acceptable excuse for the Secretariat having failed to produce some key documents in reasonable time to enable Governments to give them serious and orderly consideration. Enough time should also have been allowed for the relevant subsidiary organs to consider the proposed changes before they came before CPC; only UNCTAD, in its Working Party, had been able to do so in sufficient detail. Governments would perhaps need to review the scheduling of those organs to allow them to participate fully in the process. It should also be pointed out that the medium-term plan, in its current form and given the manner in which it was revised, was neither an effective tool of management nor an adequate means of intergovernmental oversight. The States members of the European Community thus fully supported the CPC recommendation that a prototype of a new format of the medium-term plan should be developed.

35. Thirdly, considerations relevant to the structure of the plan and those central to the budget were not necessarily at the same level. For example, he wondered whether it had been necessary to try to bring the proposed revisions into line with the results of the first phase of the restructuring exercise, and whether it had not been premature to introduce detailed changes to take account of the results of UNCED and the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, when the follow-up to UNCED, in particular, was still under active discussion at the current session of the Assembly. The conclusion must be that programme planning left much to be desired in many respects and the Committee would have to devote its attention in the immediate future to a cooperative effort with the Secretariat aimed at improving the process. The European Community was resolved to participate actively in that effort.

36. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) asked the Secretariat to compile a list for the purposes of the informal consultations on the reform process, of provisions governing the terms and limitations thereon of the chairmen of expert bodies and agencies and programmes in the United Nations system; the Chairman of ACABQ could perhaps himself provide the information on the situation in the body over which he presided.

37. Mr. MARTOHADINEGORO (Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations: towards transparency of presentation, management and reporting" (A/45/797; JIU/REP/90/3), said that although the report had been issued two years previously, the Committee had not been able to take it up earlier, partly because the Secretary-General's comments on it had not been issued. The representatives of the Secretariat, however, had assured the

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Inspectors that their report was already being used in its draft form, and some of its recommendations did in fact seem to have been put into effect. There was indeed a marked difference between the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 and those for previous bienniums as far as the presentation of extrabudgetary resources was concerned.

38. The Inspectors took as their point of departure the principle that the programme budget should be a handy and coherent document, and that it should be sufficiently transparent to allow Member States to grasp quickly major trends in the evolution, distribution and utilization of resources. The Secretary-General's proposals regarding the format of the programme budget (A/C.5/47/3) were consonant with those ideas. More specifically, the Inspectors had recommended that the proposed programme budget, apart from comparisons at the subprogramme level with the preceding biennium, should refer throughout to previously identified and continuing extrabudgetary outputs, and that a succinct analysis should be made of major trends in the utilization of extrabudgetary resources by programme, the distribution of extrabudgetary resources by major donors, and the actual availability of resources against forecasts.

39. As far as the administration of and reporting on extrabudgetary resources was concerned, it had been found that quite a number of United Nations officials dealing with those resources did not have an adequate knowledge of the regulations and rules applicable. The Inspectors had therefore recommended to that the Secretary-General should prepare and circulate among the officials concerned an "Extrabudgetary Resources and Activities Manual" and also plan a series of training seminars at which the manual could be used as a resource document. In that connection, the Inspectors were gratified that the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had made training, in particular management training, one of his major priorities.

40. The Inspectors had also noted that, in some instances, audit recommendations had not received sufficient attention. They had therefore recommended that the Secretariat should prepare a report on the status of the implementation of major audit recommendations. Because of the ever-increasing volume of extrabudgetary resources, the internal audit function should be given more importance and more independence. That could only be done if the Internal Audit Division was transferred from the Department of Administration and Management and made directly responsible to the Secretary-General. That recommendation ran counter to the arguments advanced by the Secretariat in favour of retaining the status quo, but coincided with recommendation 39 of the Group of 18.

41. To make reporting on extrabudgetary resources and activities financed therefrom more transparent, it would also be advisable for reporting on performance to be improved substantially, a matter which had already been the subject of another JIU report (A/43/124; JIU/REP/88/1). The recommendations formulated in that report had been found still valid at the forty-sixth

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session but the Secretariat did not seem to have paid adequate attention to them. In the view of the Inspectors, the programme performance report should contain a comprehensive analysis of the outputs achieved against the objectives set for the activities financed from extrabudgetary resources, while the budget performance report should contain more detailed data on those resources. Member States would then be fully informed regarding their actual use. In that context, CPC, at its thirty-second session, had stressed the need for a closer link between the two reports (A/47/6 (Part I) para. 44).

42. The Inspectors considered that the measures they proposed would ensure a more effective integrated management of extrabudgetary resources and facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the results obtained against the objectives set in the proposed programme budget. The measures would thus be of great help in the preparation of future medium-term plans and, by enhancing the Organization's credibility, would encourage donors to increase their contributions to the Organization's extrabudgetary activities. With the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and that of the Secretary-General on the same topic (A/46/545), Member States had a solid base for discussion of the problem, the importance of which was increasing because of the unprecedented growth of peace-keeping operations.

43. Mr. MAQTARI (Yemen) wondered whether it was really useful to examine a report which was at least two years old and whether JIU might not devote its attention to the status of the Organization's extrabudgetary resources in 1991 and 1992.

44. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that the matters raised in the report before the Committee were still completely current and relevant, in that they concerned questions of methodology and the appropriate manner of dealing with extrabudgetary resources. In any event, those matters would be examined in detail when the Committee took up the relevant report of the Secretary-General and the report of ACABQ thereon.

AGENDA ITEM 112: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/47/140 and Add.1, A/47/168 and Add.1, A/47/416 and A/47/508; A/C.5/47/5, 6, 9, 14 and 20; A/C.5/46/2, 7, 9, 13 and 16; A/46/326 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

45. Mr. SIEGENTHALER (President of the United Nations Staff Committee) said that, at a time when the Organization was undergoing rapid and far-reaching changes on an unprecedented scale, a profound feeling of concern was widespread among the staff, at every level and at all duty stations. Among the various factors which contributed to that state of affairs, mention should be made, first, of the problem of the safety and security of international civil servants. Although cases of detention and ill-treatment of staff members were becoming less frequent, essentially because of political developments in certain countries, the number of international civil servants who had lost their lives while on mission had been almost as high during the current year as in all previous years put together. That regrettable state of

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affairs was due to the increasing number of peace-keeping operations and, above all, to a change in their nature. It was obvious that the missions currently being entrusted to the Organization went well beyond the ambit of peace-keeping operations as traditionally conceived, as was shown by the scale of the action being undertaken in the former Yugoslavia, in Somalia or in Cambodia. Even operations of a strictly humanitarian nature often took place in conflict situations involving protagonists which were not even sovereign States.

46. In the circumstances, if the risk of fatalities was to be avoided, it was essential that extreme care should be exercised in the planning, preparation and execution of such missions and that they should be kept within the realm of the possible. In the case of missions staffed by civilians, the rules laid down in the Security Handbook must be scrupulously observed. Shortcomings in communications and supplies must also be corrected. The importance of the question was evident in that more than 600 staff members were currently engaged in difficult, even dangerous, missions. In general, the Organization needed to do more to help the families of staff who had been arrested, abducted or killed.

47. On the subject of the independence of the international civil service, it was important to know what specific measures were to be taken to put an end to the practices of those Member States which supplemented their nationals' salaries or obliged them to remit a portion thereof to their Government.

48. Above all, however, the new situation created within the Secretariat by the restructuring was having an increasingly adverse effect on staff morale. Staff members were not, in principle, opposed to any steps intended to make the Secretariat more efficient; they felt, however, that they had the right to be informed, and even consulted, about what the restructuring entailed, if only to be able to contribute to the process. Assurances had been given that no staff member would lose his job because of restructuring, but that was not enough to ease concerns when proposals made by an outside consultant - on the basis of what appeared to be a somewhat superficial analysis - recommended the elimination, in short order, of whole sections of the Secretariat. In the absence of information from official sources, the most alarming rumours were circulating. In that context, it was gratifying to report that the Staff Committee had recently been able to meet the Secretary-General and to broach those issues with him in a spirit of dialogue. The fact remained, however, that restructuring would seriously affect the careers of both Professional and General Service staff. Care should also be taken to ensure that it did not endanger the progress achieved in upgrading the status of women in the Secretariat.

49. It was to be hoped that the detailed report on the administration of justice, which the Committee was to have considered at the current session, would be submitted to it at the next session. Lastly, he welcomed the announcement by the Director of Personnel that guidelines on the question of sexual harassment in the Secretariat would be published shortly.

50. Mr. KAIRON (India) emphasized the need for the Organization, at a time when its international role was growing, to continue to recruit the most qualified staff members and to retain and motivate them in order to optimize productivity and efficiency. That was particularly important inasmuch as personnel costs accounted for approximately three fourths of the Organization's budget.

51. The report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/47/416) indicated the evolution in the geographical distribution of staff. The number of unrepresented countries had increased, mainly because new countries had been admitted to the Organization. On the other hand, the number of underrepresented countries had declined, which was welcome. The representation of developing countries as a group had slightly declined; the Secretariat must take the necessary steps to rectify that trend.

52. His delegation welcomed the slight increase in the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution; however, the Secretariat and Member States must do much more if the target of 35 per cent by 1995 was to be achieved. The number of women should increase in all posts, not only in those subject to geographical distribution. In that connection, he noted with satisfaction that the target of 35 per cent had nearly been achieved in language posts. With regard to the increased representation of women from developing countries - an objective which the General Assembly had emphatically stressed - his delegation found that of the 50 candidates recruited during the period from July 1991 to June 1992, only 12 had been from developing countries. Accordingly, greater efforts should be made to recruit qualified women from those countries; his delegation hoped that the Secretariat had compiled a roster of qualified women candidates with a view to possible recruitment.

53. The additional information provided by the Secretariat on the geographical distribution of staff in posts financed from extrabudgetary funds was useful as it gave a more balanced picture of the overall representation of Member States in the Organization. Such information should be updated and should be routinely included in reports on the composition of the Secretariat.

54. With regard to the question of desirable ranges, it was regrettable that the General Assembly had not yet been able to reach any decision on that matter, particularly on the possible increase in the weight of the population factor in the formula for determining desirable ranges. The Indian delegation believed that the current weighting of 5 per cent was insignificant and that, for reasons of fairness, it should at least be restored to its 1987 level, namely, 7.2 per cent. His delegation was willing to cooperate with other delegations in reaching a consensus on that issue at the current session, as well as on the issue of the degree of flexibility required for the determination of the upper and lower limits of each desirable range.

55. Posts subject to geographical distribution represented less than 10 per cent of the total posts in the Organization. The reasons for that situation were set forth in document A/47/416. Nevertheless, in view of the

(Mr. Kairon, India)

Organization's international and universal character, the widest possible geographical distribution should be the rule for all posts, particularly those in the Field Service, General Service and language-related categories. It should be noted that some countries did not have any nationals in posts with special language requirements; that was not, however, due to a lack of qualified candidates.

56. The Indian delegation supported the proposals outlined in the two reports on career development (A/C.5/47/6) and training (A/C.5/47/9), as it attached great importance to both those subjects. Any organization, if it was to retain staff, must have a career development plan and avenues for promotion on the basis of performance evaluation. Furthermore, the need for staff training and mobility could not be overemphasized, in view of the Organization's expanding activities and growing involvement in peace-keeping operations.

57. Mr. SIAKALENGE (Zambia) said that his delegation had noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the Secretary-General to improve the composition of the Secretariat, taking into account a more equitable geographical and gender distribution at all levels. Much remained to be done, however; accordingly, the Zambian delegation would be grateful if the Secretariat could develop short- and long-term recruitment strategies, together with concrete measures, emphasizing the following aspects: the recruitment of staff from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States; the appointment of nationals of those Member States to senior posts in the Secretariat; equal opportunity for candidates from unrepresented Member States; an increase in the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution at all levels; and a rotation of posts at higher levels in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical and gender distribution.

58. A misunderstanding appeared to persist with regard to competitive examinations. What was important, especially for Member States which were still unrepresented or underrepresented, was not to know that competitive examinations had been held, but rather to know where they had been held and in which countries they would be held in the future. It was of even greater significance to know the number of successful candidates eventually recruited. What was essential, however, was to ensure that competitive examinations were targeted to unrepresented and underrepresented countries, and even to countries within range, but certainly, not to overrepresented countries.

59. Lastly, the Zambian delegation would like to know the reasons for the continuation of the ban on recruitment; that measure, initially characterized as "temporary", had remained in effect for nearly 10 months.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

60. The CHAIRMAN said that he had received a communication from the President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations, requesting

(The Chairman)

authorization to address the Committee under agenda item 113, and a communication from the President of the Coordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations system, requesting authorization to present a document and to address the Committee under the same item. Those requests had been transmitted in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/213. If he heard no objections, he would take it the Committee wished to grant the requests.

61. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.